as the managers, and you will always find them watching the public taste in the same manner.

Occasionally an individual dramatist, and not always the best from a technical point of view, will develop such a strong personal bias as to write on subjects suggested by his own tastes without any regard to the current of popular wishes. If he is a strong enough man he will become a leader of the public in his dramatic tastes. Sometimes in rare instances he will influence the public so decidedly that he compels the contemporary school of writers to follow him. This has been the case in all periods. I need not mention Shakespeare, as everything said about him is a matter of course.

Take the vile dramatic era of Charles II. Wycherley led the brutes, but Congreve came up and combatted with his brilliant comedies the vileness of the Restoration school, and Hallam says of him that he introduced decency to the stage that afterward drove his own comedies off it. A little after Congreve, the school, so to speak, for we have nothing but the school, was so stupid that it brought forth no great writers and produced weak sentimental plays. Then came Goldsmith, who wrote "She Stoops to Conquer" actually as a protest against the feeble sentimentality I have referred to. Richard Brinsley Sheridan was made possible by Goldsmith. We went on after that with a school of old comedies. When we speak of the "old comedies," I am not talking about Beaumont and Fletcher, nor Wycherley, nor Vanbrugh, nor even Congreve, but of the comedy of Goldsmith in the third quarter of the eighteenth century down to Bulwer Lytton's "Money" and Boucicault's "London Assurance," bringing us to about 1840. Then there swung a school of what we call the palmy days of old comedy, and in the '40's it dwindled to nothing, and England and America waited until the early '60's. Then came Tom Robertson with his so called tea cup and saucer school, which consisted of sententious dialogue, simple situations, conventional characterizations, and threads of plots, until the Pinero and Jones put a stop to the Robertson fad.

Follows Popular Judgment

THIS proves in my judgment that the school always starts by being shown what the popular taste is, and follows that, until some individual discovery that the popular taste is changed. The tendency of the school is always to become academic and fixed in its ideas—it is the individual who points to the necessary changes. Schools and these special individuals are interdependent.

As to the present comedies in America: in the first place, it is impossible as a rule to decide fully what are the tendencies of a school when one is living in the midst of its activities. There is no marked tendency now, and as far as I can see it is only the occasional man who discovers the tendency of the times. Pinero undoubtedly saw that the public was tired of the tea cup and saucer. Probably had he not thought so he would have gone on in that school.

Undoubtedly more plays are written to order than are written on the mere impulse of authors, independently of popular demand. The order play simply represents the popular demand as understood by managers, and the meeting of that demand in each age produces the great mass of any nation's drama. So far from lowering the standard of dramatic writing, it is a necessary impulse in the development of any drama. It is only when the school goes on blindly without seeing a change in the popular taste that the occasional man I have spoken of comes on. When the work of the school is legitimately in line with the public taste the merely eccentric dramatist is like Lord Dundreary's bird with a single feather that goes in a corner and flocks all by itself. He may be a strong enough man to attract attention to his individuality, and his plays may be really great in themselves, but his work has little influence on the development of the art. In fact, there is no development of the art except in the line of popular taste. The specially great men mentioned have simply discovered the changes in the popular taste, and to a certain extent perhaps guided it.

SAYINGS OF A CELEBRATED WIT

THERE have been more gigantic figures in Wall Street than W. R. Travers, but few brighter minds and few who are more pleasantly remembered. He was in the Street twenty years or more, and in that time built up a large fortune, besides living like a king, entertaining royally, and enjoying the best of the world's pleasures. He was neither a Jay Gould in intrigue and masterly campaigning, a Commodore Vanderbilt in construction or large market leadership, a J. P. Morgan in commanding financial ability, nor a Jacob H. Schiff in international breadth as a salesman of securities. Neither did he possess in superlative degree the traits that made Andrew Carnegie, H. H. Rogers, H. C. Frick, John W. Gates, D. G. Reid, C. M. Schwab, Daniel Guggenheim, great captains of finance.

Yet he was in his own way a remarkable and engaging personality and a moneymaker. It is for his peculiarity of speech and his flashing wit that he is chiefly remembered now in Wall Street, and the stories that are still told about him would fill a volume.

Lost Nothing by Stutters

HE really didn't need that stutter to carry his witticisms, but they lost nothing by their hyphenated medium of transmission. The stutter was Travers's own, and it has probably served as a historical preservative for some of the Travers scintillations. It is the lot of few men to be remembered in Wall Street twenty years after death, and W. R. Travers went to his last resting place just two decades ago. In the stock market Travers was chronically a bear, though he had the sense to take and keep profits, a trait rare with the bear, or for that matter with the bull.

A few years after his appearance in Wall Street an old friend from his native city, Baltimore, met him in a down town resort. They chatted a few minutes, when the friend suddenly said:

"Say, Travers, you stutter a great deal worse than you did in Baltimore."

"Got to," replied Travers. "It's a h-h-eap b-b-bigger t-town."

While still almost a stranger in New York, a member of the Stock Exchange, wishing to do the agreeable, took Travers to see a yacht race. The host had a fine boat, knew everybody, and took pleasure in pointing out the celebrities. After an hour or two the guest turned to his friend and said:

"S-s-eems to m-m-e that m-m-ost everybody on 'C-C-hange has a yacht."

"Yes, lot's of 'em own their own boats. Some of 'em are mighty fine, too—regular floating palaces."

"The b-b-rokers and b-b-bankers are f-f-ixed all r-r-ight; b-b-but I d-d-don't rem-m-memb-ber s-s-seeing any of the c-c-u-s-tom-mer's yachts. Wh-wh-ere are they?"

Bombarding Jay Gould

ONCE upon a time Jay Gould's credit was savagely attacked, and in self-protection he opened his vaults to the inspection of a committee of bankers and let them make an appraisement of the contents. The committee reported it had found "free" bonds, and stocks having market value of about seventy million dollars at ruling quotations. Thinking to make an overwhelming hit by this demonstration of strength, Gould sent people out to give the glad news swiftest circulation in the right quarters.

"Good g-gracious!" exclaimed Travers when the thriller reached him. "H-h-as the old s-s-s-coundrel got that m-m-any stocks l-left to s-s-ell."

And, as the story runs, he proceeded to pound the Goulds harder than ever, on the theory that the "Wizard" would be trying to get rid of some of that seventy million dollars' worth on competitive selling. The result proved the correctness of the

surmise, for prices went all to pieces. Addison Cammack divides with Travers the credit of having perpetrated this bon mot, but the honor seems to belong rightfully to the stuttering humorist.

The Travers wit was not confined to Wall Street. On one occasion he attended a banquet which was presided over by A. T. Stewart, then the leading dry goods merchant of America. Travers had no use for Stewart, and lost no opportunity to cast ridicule on him. Stewart was a perpetual target for sharp tongues. At this banquet the merchant prince was especially irritating to the blue bloods.

Finally, when everything was in readiness, the presiding officer rapped for order. There was not a quick response, and with some impatience Stewart repeated the gavel performance, giving the table a succession of hard raps. Then, as the assemblage quieted down and just as the man at the head of the table was about to call for order, Travers, in a thin, high keyed voice, piped out, "C-cash!"

"Jim" Fisk at the height of his career bought himself a splendid yacht and gave a swell dinner aboard, to which he invited W. R. Travers. At that time Fisk and Jay Gould were fast friends.

As Fisk was conducting Travers and a detachment of guests through the boat, he stopped before a freshly painted portrait of himself and Gould which stood out from the wall at the top of the main stairway, and exclaimed airily:

"Well, boys, what do you think of that pair of masterpieces?"

"I've only one cr-cr-iticism t-t-o make," said Travers, after everybody had rhapsodized to the satisfaction of Fisk. "You s-s-h-ould h-have t-told the artist t-t-o p-p-paint you and J-Jay on the arms of a c-c-cross, with the S-S-avior in the m-m-middle."

A Joke on the Joker

STOPPING one day in the store of a bird and dog fancier, Travers made a number of inquiries of the proprietor, who was a crotchety chap with a tongue as sharp as his customer's, and, pausing before the cage of a large parrot, Travers looked admiringly at the bird and remarked on its fine points.

"That's a sp-p-plendid p-p-p-parrot. C-c-can he t-t-talk?"

"If he couldn't talk any better than you, I'd cut his blasted head off!" snapped the storekeeper.

Travers sometimes took a lively interest in politics. Once he got tied up in the initial stages of a reform movement, and at a meeting of a self-appointed committee representing the "better element" the question of a candidate for Mayor came up for discussion. The merits and running qualities of several men were debated for a long time, but none seemed just to fill the bill. They were looking for an ideal man of lofty character, unblemished purity, public spirited, advanced views on the live issues, an administrative genius, and commanding the respect of the community. Travers said little, and listened to the talk with growing impatience. Finally an especially long winded and tiresome man, after reciting at length the qualities their candidate should possess, turned to him with the query, "Do you know any such man, Travers."

"I d-d-do. I have in m-my m-m-mind j-just the m-man you w-w-want."

The assembled reformers hailed him as a savior, and with one voice begged him to name the man.

"I d-don't think H-he w-w-would be av-v-vailable, g-g-gentlemen; unf-f-fortun-n-nately, H-he was c-c-crucified eight-t-teen h-hundred years ago."

Henry Clews and Travers were close friends, but the wit took great delight in joking the financier, who took his sallies with unfailing good humor. Clews was an industrious letter writer and "interviewer" on all public questions. He never let a chance go by for engaging in current discussion. On one occasion he had written a magazine article on national finances which he felt proud over. Meeting Travers, he accosted him with:

"Say, Travers, have you seen my last article on the currency question?"

"I d-d-don't kn-n-now, Henry, b-b-but I ho-ho-hope so."

Another time he hailed Clews as the latter was entering a crowded club room, and with simulated boisterousness introduced him as "one of our most illustrious self made men." The financier took off his hat and bowed low, exposing as he did so a pate as destitute of hair as a billiard ball, an exhibit which led Travers to say:

"Henry, wh-h-ile you w-were—were m-m-making yourself, w-wh-y d-d-didn't you p-p-put s-s-some h-hair on t-t-top of your h-h-head?"

Travers and Jerome

TRAVERS and the late Lawrence R. Jerome, known always as "Larry," were inseparable friends, though forever victimizing one another with practical jokes. Once the two were traveling together on a train in the South. Just before the conductor was expected to come through the car, Travers fell asleep.

Jerome slyly removed from Travers's pocket the pass on which he was traveling, and, going forward several seats, sat down and simulated slumber. When the conductor shook him and asked for his ticket, Jerome pretended to search through all his pockets. Then, knowing exactly what Travers would say under the circumstances, and imitating his friend's stuttering speech, he said:

"I'm W-w-william R. T-t-travers of New York. I had a p-p-pass; b-b-but I c-c-can't find it. I'm a b-b-brother-in-law of Mr. Blank, the president of the road, and I assure you it's all right."

The conductor accepted the explanation and passed on. A moment later he shook the sleeping Travers by the shoulder. Travers felt for his pass and then, like his impostor friend, searched through all his pockets, the conductor regarding him with sudden suspicion. Finally he stuttered out:

"I'm W-w-william R. T-t-travers of New York. I had a p-p-pass; b-b-but I c-c-can't find it. I'm a b-b-brother-in-law of Mr. Blank, the president of the road, and I assure you it's all right."

"I guess not," replied the conductor. "You can't fool me, even with that stutter. You'll have to pay your fare or be put off."

Jerome permitted Travers to work himself into a rage of indignation, and then interposed with the pass and a cigar for the conductor.

The Siamese Twins

TRAVERS in company with some friends went to see the Siamese twins. He examined attentively the singular ligature that connected the twins, and turning to the lecturer solemnly said, "B-b-b-br-br-others, I p-p-presume?"

The story of how Travers suppressed an oracular individual who was boring everybody with a long winded essay on the oyster had considerable vogue. The fellow was going on endlessly and aimlessly, and finally started upon a discussion as to the intelligence of the bivalve, saying that it was a disputed point among scientists whether the oyster had brains.

At this juncture Travers came to the relief of the wearied company with the interruption: "Of c-c-course, the oys-oys-oyster has b-b-brains. The oys-oys-oyster kno-no-nows when to sh-sh-shut up."